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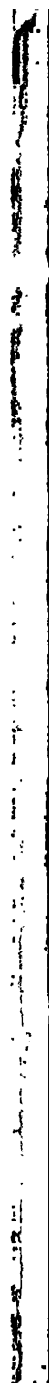
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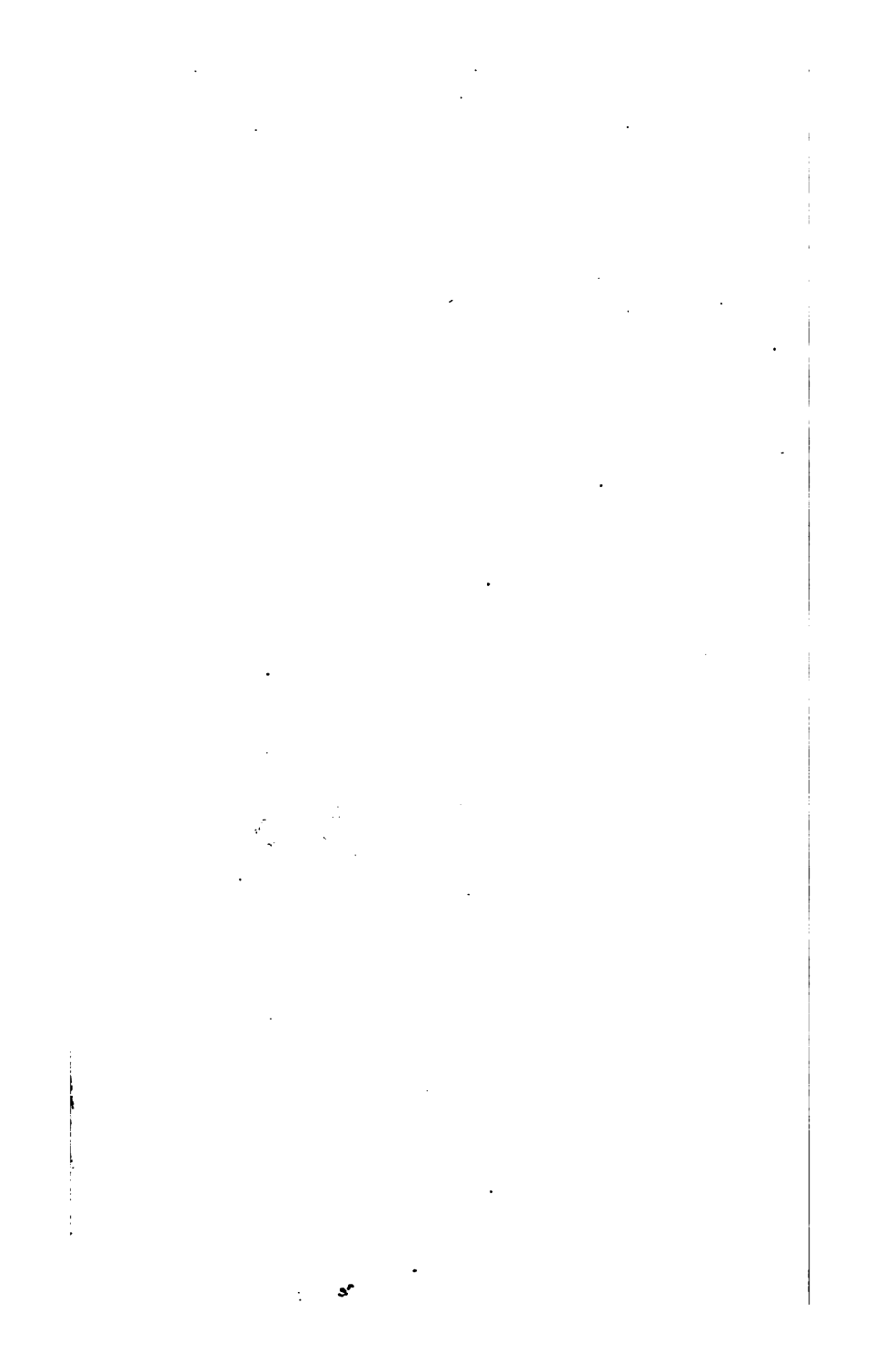
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G. A.
Westminster
8°. 13.







A SHORT
NARRATIVE
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS
OF

The GENTLEMEN, concerned in obtaining the ACT, for building a

BRIDGE at *Westminster*;

AND

Of the Steps, which the Honourable the COMMISSIONERS, appointed by that ACT, have taken to carry it into Execution.

In a LETTER to a Member of Parliament in the Country;

Together with his ANSWER.

—longæ
Ambages, sed summa sequar Fastigia Rerum. Virg.

L O N D O N :

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*Gough add
Westminster
8.13.*

THE
JOURNAL OF THE
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

1912

VOLUME 42

PART I

CONTENTS

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A Short Narrative of the Proceedings of the Gentlemen, concerned in obtaining the Act for building a BRIDGE at Westminster, &c.

S I R,

Novemb. 10th, 1737.

YOU have often desired me to give you some Account of the Proceedings relating to a Bridge at *Westminster*; and what Progress the Honourable the Commissioners, appointed by Parliament, have made in that Affair.

I am very glad it is in my power to satisfy your Curiosity; and do assure you that the following Relation thereof, may be depended upon.

I believe you will easily excuse me, that I do not trouble you with a tedious account of the Usefulness of such an Undertaking, or

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observe

(2)
observe to you how long a Bridge has been wanted there; since the many former Attempts, in the several Reigns of *Q. Elizabeth*, *James I.* *Charles I.* and *II.* when the Town was not of half the Extent it is at present, are alone sufficient Evidences thereof: I shall therefore proceed directly to put you in mind, that in the latter end of the Reign of the late King, a Petition for that End was presented to Parliament, which then failed; but was renewed in the next Sessions: And tho' a Bridge was not obtained for that Place, yet a Bill passed for building one of Timber, from *Fulham* to *Putney*, by a Toll to be laid thereon.

In the Year 1734, several publick-spirited Gentlemen, daily perceiving the want of a Bridge at *Westminster*, and the great Inconveniencies, Delays, and Dangers attending the Ferry (especially since the Town was so much enlarged towards the North-West) resolved to use their best Endeavours to set this laudable Design on foot again; and the better to assure Success, they had several Meetings to prepare Matters for future Enquiries; and made a Contribution towards defraying all necessary Charges. They consulted

sulted their present Worthy Representatives in Parliament, who intirely approved of the Design, and promised to promote it to their utmost, at a proper Season ; which Engagement, those Representatives have faithfully made good; within doors and without. They ordered exact Surveys to be made of the Roads and Streets, leading to and from the River-side, both at *Westminster*, and the opposite *Surrey Shore*. They procured a Plan, or Survey of the River, from *Vauxhall* to *York-Stairs*, made by a very able Pilot, in which the Shores, Channels, and Shoals of Sand were described, and the several Soundings, or Depths of Water were set forth. They caused the Breadth of the River to be measured, and the Ground quite cross the same to be bored in several Places, and the Swiftness of the Current, and the Course of the Tides, both as it flowed in and ebbed out, to be carefully observed. By these and other means they were enabled to make some Judgment, where the intended Bridge could be most conveniently built ; in what Place the Ground was most compact and solid, and fittest to bear the Weight of a Stone Bridge ; what quantity of Water the

River discharged at any time ; whether the Peers of such a Bridge would occasion any Encrease in the height of the Water on a Spring Tide, or cause any sensible Fall under the Arches.

This was great part of the Business of many Meetings throughout that Season ; the Result of their Enquiries on these heads, I shall mention in its proper place.

The Gentlemen that met in order to procure this laudable Design, divided themselves into several Committees ; and tho' they were continually in action, yet the preparing all these Matters took up so much time, that the Petition intended to be presented in the Spring of the Year 1735, could not be got ready and signed time enough ; which, with an Intimation from some great Personages (to whom the Gentlemen were introduced) of the Danger of an untimely Application, occasioned all Proceedings to be postponed till next Season ; but in the intermediate Autumn there were several Meetings, to concert Matters in a proper Manner, and to draw up a state of their whole Proceedings. This was left to the Care of a Gentleman who presided at almost all their Meetings,

and

and it is said, was done by him with great Accuracy, and laid before their Representatives by a Committee of the said Gentlemen ; and soon after, an Advertisement was published in the Papers, that a general Meeting of the Gentlemen, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the City and Liberty of *Westminster* would be held at the *Horn-Tavern*, in *January* 1735-6 : Where being met accordingly, the Draught of a Petition and the Heads of a Bill were read and agreed to ; and the Petition having been handed thro' all the Parishes of the City and Liberty, was signed by many thousands of the Inhabitants, and presented to the House by the Lord *Sundon*, on the 4th of *February* following ; the Purport thereof was as follows : *That the City and Liberty of Westminster, having of late Years greatly increased in Buildings and Inhabitants, was become very populous ; That it would be advantageous not only to them, but to many other of his Majesty's Subjects, and to the Publick in general, to erect a Bridge from the Horse-Ferry to Lambeth, for the more easy Communication with Surrey, Kent, and Sussex : Therefore praying that Leave be given to bring in a Bill for erecting a Bridge*
over

over the River of Thames, at the Horse-Ferry, as aforesaid, or at such other Place as the House should think most proper and convenient for that purpose. This Petition was referred to the Consideration of a Committee, before whom were summoned a great number of Persons proper to inform them on this Occasion: The Substance of their Evidence was as follows. That almost all sorts of Provision were dearer in *Westminster* than in *Surrey*, or other parts of the Town, for want of a Bridge. That the *Lambeth-Ferry* was altogether an insufficient Communication between the neighbouring Counties; always inconvenient, and often very dangerous; and many Instances were given of the Dangers and Accidents attending the Ferry, as well as of the Insolence of the Ferrymen.

That a Bridge ought not to be erected any where, at or near the Bending of the River, which reaches at least from the *Privy-Garden* to *Durham-Yard*, for the following Reasons: That the Ice, in hard Winters, directed by the Current of both Flood and Ebb, would gather between the Bridge and the *Middlesex* Shore, both above and below it, and there be accumulated; by which

means

means the Bridge would be in manifest danger of being soon destroyed : That the direction of the Stream, as well upwards as downwards, would not be streight with the Arches, and therefore occasion a very great difficulty in the Passage of Hoys, Barges, Lighters, and all other deep-loaded and unwieldy Vessels, and in blowing Weather, bring them into imminent Danger of being driven against the Peers : That the Sandsand Shoals thereabouts would render the middle Arches almost uselefs. That the River is considerably wider about that Place, than in any other for several Miles above or below, the whole Breadth being there, near 1500 Feet : And that the Ground, upon boring it, proved very unfit for the Foundation of a Bridge.

That upon measuring the River over against *New Palace-Yard*, its Breadth from *Stangate-Wharf* to *Westminster-Stairs Gate*, appeared to be about 1150 Feet. That upon boring the Ground, there was found a considerable Depth of hard Gravel, which reached one Third part of the Breadth, from *Westminster* side ; but for the other two Thirds, the Gravel lay much lower, and was covered

covered with muddy Sand and loose Clay, from 5 to 12 feet thick; where it would be impossible to make a good Foundation, without piling all under the Peers. That upon founding the River across at that Place, there were found two Channels instead of one, with a large Shoal between them; the Stream as the Tide flows in, running in that which is close to the *Westminster* Shore for the most part, and as it ebbs out, in that almost close to the *Lambeth* Shore; so that as these Two Channels are divided from One but a little way above this Place, they must of consequence run oblique to the Arches of the Bridge, and must produce the same ill Effects, as at the Elbow it self, tho' perhaps in a less degree.

That the River being measured, sounded, and bored across at the Horse-Ferry, its Breadth from House to House (which Houses project into the River on both Shores) was found to be about 830 feet, but from Wharf to Wharf, just above and below, about 930 feet. That it was there intirely free from Shoals and Sands, and deeper than at most other Places several Miles higher up, or lower down. That the Stream or Current of the Tide

Tide, both ebbing and flowing, would pass in a direct Line through the Arches of the Bridge; and the Bargemen, Lightermen and Watermen (who were against any Bridge) were of Opinion it would be of least Prejudice to them at that Place. That there was a Bed of hard Gravel of a great depth quite across the River; only close to *Westminster* Shore, between high and low Water-Mark; it was covered with Ouze and Mud. That a strong Stone Bridge might be built there, whose Peers would not take up more than one Fifth of the breadth of the River, according to a Stone Model, then to be seen in *Westminster*, done from a Design well approved of by good Judges. That if the Peers should occupy one Fourth of the River, the height of the Water would not be increased one quarter of an Inch above what is usual, even on Spring Tides, at which times the Cellars and low Grounds in *Westminster* are liable to receive Damage. And that as to the Fall which this Bridge might occasion, it would never amount to 5 Inches, and consequently be very little or no hindrance to the Navigation, since the smallest Boat or Scullar, rowed by one Man only, might pass

very easily through, either way, against the strongest Tide: Neither could this Fall be of any Prejudice to *Westminster* or *Lambeth*, because it never happens, till some time after high Water, when the Surface is some feet lower than High Water-Mark.

The Committee, after Debate, resolved, That it was their Opinion, the Petitioners had fully made good the Allegations of their Petition; and that a Bridge ought to be built: as to the Place where, some insisted to have it near *Whitehall*, or *Scotland-Yard*; whilst others, swayed by the Evidence they had heard, were as strenuous for the *Horse-Ferry*; whereupon, as the only Expedient, the Matter was compounded, and they reported *New Palace-Yard* as the properest Place.

The House of Commons agreeing to this Report, ordered in a Bill accordingly, which was presented (having been previously prepared by the Gentlemen that first met, who made many occasional Amendments to it) a few days after; and, upon the first Reading was referred to a Committee of the whole House, and Leave was given to the Petitioners for and against the Bill, to be heard by Council

Council at the Bar of the House. Soon after this, viz. on the 22d of *February*, His Majesty was pleased to send a Message to the House of Commons, by Sir *Charles Wager*, signifying to them, *That if it should be found necessary to open a Passage through the Privy-Garden of Whitehall, to the Bridge intended to be built across the Thames, from New Palace-Yard to the opposite Shore, His Majesty, as far as his Interest is concern'd, consents, that this House may make what Provision they think proper for that Purpose.*

The chief Petitioners against the Bill, were the City of *London*, the Borough of *Southwark*, and the Company of *Watermen*; but Council appeared only in behalf of the City and Borough against the Bill. The Opposition had much less weight, than those that set it on foot imagined; for, after the Council, and the Evidence had been heard on both sides, publick Good was preferred to private Interest, as it should always be, and the Bill passed, on a Division of 104 against 12; and being sent to the Lords, the Opposition was continued in that House, where Council and Evidence being also heard on both sides, their Lordships passed the Bill,

with some Amendments, to which the Commons agreed, after Debates; and the King gave the Royal Assent on the 20th of May, 1736.

As the Act is printed, I refer you to it for Particulars; all I shall mention out of it is, that by this Act, Commissioners to the number of near 200 Lords and Commons were appointed; any nine of whom were impowered, after the 22d of June then ensuing, *to design, assign, and lay out in what manner, and with what Materials the said Bridge should be erected and built, from New Palace-Yard to the opposite Shore*; provided they should leave 760 feet Water-way, which answered to about two Thirds of the Breadth of the River at that Place; provided also, that no Houses or Sheds should ever be built on the Bridge, when finished; and also provided, that they should indemnify the Company of *Watermen*, for the loss of their *Sundays Ferries* near the Bridge, &c. The Commissioners had also Power to lay open, and widen the Streets and Ways leading to it; and in order to do this, could oblige the Owners of Houses and Lands to sell, by a Jury.

To,

To defray the Charges of this Undertaking, among several ways that had been proposed, the Parliament thought fit, to grant them a Lottery, consisting of 125000 Tickets at 5 *l.* each, amounting to 625000 *l.* out of which, a Deduction was, to be made of 100000 *l.* which is at the rate of 16 *l.* *per Cent.* of the whole Money ventured, towards building the Bridge, keeping it in Repair, and opening the Ways leading to it, &c. The Commissioners met, according to the Act, on the said 22d of *June*, at the *Jerusalem Chamber*; and having appointed Officers, agreed to allow the Bank 2000 *l.* for their Care and Trouble in receiving and paying the Money ventured in the Lottery.

At some of their subsequent Meetings, several Designs of Stone Bridges were presented to them, and some Proposals; and among others; there was a Set of Artificers, who offered to build one Peer, of such Dimensions, and in such Place, as the Commissioners should appoint, of solid Stone from the bottom of the River, at their own Cost and Charges; to which they were induc'd, as they set forth, by a Report that there were not *English* Artificers able to build the intended

tended Bridge. And this Proposal, which appear'd to have some National Spirit in it, was well received at that time. The Commissioners adjourned themselves from time to time, without coming to any material Resolution, waiting the Success of the Lottery, which did not answer Expectation: for which reason, they made long Adjournments, without doing any Business, till the last Sessions of Parliament, 1736-7, when they obtained a second Act, to explain and amend the former; whereby all the Authority, vested in them by the first Act, was confirmed, and a new Lottery granted, consisting of 70000 Tickets at 10*l.* each; amounting to 700000*l.* of which, 7000 were Prizes, and the rest Blanks, valued in the Act at 7*l.* 10*s.* each: both Blanks and Prizes were subject to a Deduction of 14*l.* *per Cent.* amounting to 98000*l.* which was to be applied to the building of the Bridge, &c. And the Subscribers for 50 Tickets and upwards, to have 3*l.* *per Cent. Præmium*: And in case this Sum of 98000*l.* was not sufficient to defray all Charges and to build the Bridge, and to maintain and preserve the same when built, the Commissioners had Power, by this new Act,

Act, to lay a Toll on the Bridge at the Rates specified therein: And in case it should be found hereafter necessary, His Majesty was empowered to incorporate the Commissioners; and grant them a Seal, whereby they might borrow any Sum or Sums of Money, on the Credit of their Toll, at an Interest not exceeding 5 *l. per Cent.* and assign over the said Toll, or any part thereof, either for a Time, or in Perpetuity; to raise a Sum that should be sufficient to build the said Bridge, if the Commissioners thought fit, without a necessity of applying again to Parliament. And lastly, the Commissioners were at liberty to build it, either at *New Palace-Yard*, or at the *Horse-Ferry*, or at any other Place in the Parish of St. John the Evangelist. Some of the Reasons for this Alteration of the first Act, are thus delivered in the Second; *That the building a Bridge from New Palace-Yard, in the City of Westminster, to the opposite Shore in the County of Surrey, and the purchasing and providing proper Ways and Passages to and from the same, may be attended with very great Expence; and a Bridge might be built from some other part of the City of Westminster cross the River of Thames, at*

a less Charge, and which would be as commodious and beneficial, and of as general Use.

Whilst this Act was depending in the House of Commons, at the second Reading in a Committee of the whole House, on the 3th of *March* 1736-7, a Motion was made, *That it be an Instruction to the said Committee, that they have power to receive a Clause or Clauses, to empower the Commissioners to treat with, and purchase of the Proprietors of the Bridge cross the Thames, between Fulham and Putney, their Interest and Property in the said Bridge, and the Tolls payable there.* But it passed in the Negative.

I thought it absolutely necessary, Sir, to point out to you this Step in the House, as it will explain the Motives of several of the Proceedings and Resolutions, taken by *some* of the Commissioners afterwards.

This second Act passed into a Law on the 21st of *June* 1737. The Lottery was soon after filled, and the Commissioners reassumed their Meetings, at the *Jerusalem Chamber*.

The Publick, who had suspended their Expectations last Year, on account of the bad Success of the former Lottery, perceiving this last to fill, waited impatiently to know

know what Resolutions the Commissioners would take; thinking, that as Money was no longer wanting, this Year would not be lost as the former was: but you will easily judge of the true Reasons, why nothing was done, or intirely concluded upon this Year, after you have had some account of the Commissioners Proceedings since the last Act.

They met for the first time on the 24th of June 1737, at the *Jerusalem Chamber*, when they ordered, among other things, That some of the Workmen and Artificers, who had made Proposals last Year, should attend them at the next Meeting, with their Schemes, and that others who had been employed, should produce their Plans and Sections of the River, relating to the *Horse-Ferry* and *Palace-Yard*; and then they adjourned for a Week.

At the next Meeting, the Persons ordered, attended, and were severally heard: Enquiries were made concerning the Expence of a Bridge, partly of Stone, and partly of Wood, to be built at either of the Places above mentioned; and the Workmen being asked, whether they would engage on the same

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footing,

footing, as they offered last Year; they answered, they were both willing and ready. Some Commissioners observed, that the building one Peer in the deepest part of the River (tho' attended with Success) would be no Proof, that a Bridge built on such Peers would stand; because a Peer might easily be built, that would sustain its own Weight against the Action of the Tides, when perhaps it could not support the Weight of the Arches, and their lateral Pressure or Thrust, without danger of giving way.

Thomas Ripley Esq; Comptroller of His Majesty's Works, &c. then informed the Commissioners, what would be the Expence of a Stone Bridge, according to a Scheme by him produced, for *Palace-Yard*; the Peers to be supported by Piles drove into the Ground, and sawn off just below the Surface of the River at low Water; and it was asserted, that such a Bridge would be as solid and durable, as if built with Stone from the Bottom. This Bridge was to be only 30 feet wide at top, with Recesses on the Peers; and it was there affirmed, would prove a commodious Passage for Cattle, all Carriages, and Foot-Passengers, and that it would be compleated in three Years,

Years, or less time ; and that Artificers would give proper Security for their Performance. Hereupon the Commissioners ordered, that the Persons who last Year offered to build a Peer of solid Stone from the Bottom, at their own Risk and Charges, should attend them at the next Meeting, with proper Designs and Estimates for a Bridge, according to Mr. Ripley's Scheme, and should be ready to propose their Security ; and then they adjourned for a Week.

Much about this time, they agreed to allow the Bank of *England* 3000*l.* and no more, instead of 2000*l.* as they had agreed last Year, in consideration of their *great Trouble and Charges*, attending the receiving and paying the Money ventured in the new Lottery, *which the Bank consented to accept of.*

On the 6th of *July*, the said Persons attended with a Plan of such a Bridge for *Palace-Yard*, as is last mentioned, consisting of 17 Arches, whose Peers of Stone were to stand on the *tops of Piles*, as mentioned above: the Breadth at the top, or clear Passage, to be *only 30 feet*, with Recesses over each Peer; the Span-drels of the Arches, and most of the inside filled

with *Chalk and Rubble*, and the *Outside-cased* with *Portland Stone*, the Passage over to be railed in with Iron, and paved ; all this they offered to perform for 124000*l.* upon Condition they should be paid 80000*l.* at different times, as the Work went on, and the remaining 44000*l.* was to be left in the hands of the Commissioners, by way of Security against any Accident, that might befall the Bridge for the space of two Years ; during which time they craved an Interest for the Remainder, after the rate of 5*l. per Cent.* and that in case the Bridge stood so long ; at the end of the said two Years, they should be paid the remaining 44000*l.*

After some Considerations on this Proposal, so many Objections were made against the Solidity of such a Bridge, and the extraordinary Conditions required in their Estimate, that this Project was rejected, or more properly, dropt : And at the same Meeting, Mr. *Ripley* made another Proposal to the Commissioners, of a Bridge, either at the *New Palace-Yard*, or at the *Horse-Ferry*, to be entirely of Wood, and then they adjourned for two or three Days.

At

At the next Meeting, the Commissioners, without making any more Enquiries, being satisfied with those they had already made, resolved, *the Bridge should be of Timber, and placed at the Horse-Ferry*, upon a Division, as was said, of 14 against 12; which by a Mistake of telling the Clerk for one of the Commissioners, appeared at first, 13 against 13, and was determined by the Chairman, for the *Horse-Ferry*.

As there happened to be a large Board that Day, much sooner than usual, so after coming to those two Resolutions, about the Place and Materials, they adjourned for three Weeks, and broke up immediately, having ordered the following Advertisement to be put in the publick News-Papers.

Jerusalem-Chamber, July 8th, 1737.
The Commissioners for building a Bridge at
Westminster, do hereby give notice to all
Persons who are desirous to contract for
building a Bridge of Timber, from the Horse-
Ferry, in the City of Westminster, to the
opposite Shore, in the County of Surrey, that
they may deliver in their Plans and Propo-
sals, sealed up, on Friday the 29th Instant,
to

to the Commissioners, at the Jerusalem-Chamber, in the Deanery of Westminster, by ten of the Clock in the Forenoon.

Jos. Ayloffe.

No Resolution, from Commissioners appointed by Parliament, ever met with so great and so general a Dislike from the Publick. The Workmen and Artificers took notice, that the breadth of the River was not so much as mentioned in the printed Advertisement; which Breadth, those who had a mind to bring in Plans and Proposals, were obliged to inform themselves of as well as they could, from several Pamphlets that appeared about that time, most of them full of Errors in the Numbers, and Blunders in the Reasoning: They also observed, with great Surprize, that the Breadth of the intended Bridge, and the Measures or Scantlings of the Timbers, were not at all fixed in the Advertisement; which occasioned the great Variety that appeared in the Draughts and Models they afterwards presented.

Many Persons of Judgment and Taste, were extremely disgusted at the thoughts of a Wooden Bridge, over so fine a River as the

Thames:

Thames : as such a Bridge would be in danger of being carried away, the first hard Winter, and at best, would want perpetual Repairs ; which, besides the Obstructions those Repairs would often occasion, would also make such a wretched Performance amount to as much Money in a few Years, as would have built a magnificent, solid, and lasting Stone Bridge : They observed, that Wooden Bridges have always been found so inconvenient over large Rivers, that when the City of *London* was not the fifth part of what it is at present, as to Extent, Number of Inhabitants, and Wealth, the Citizens found themselves obliged to undertake the Stone Bridge they have now, in a great measure upon charitable Contributions ; and this was done at a time, when building in Tide-Rivers was very little known, as appears from the irregular manner in which they disposed and built their Peers, and the monstrous Sterlings which they were soon after obliged to place round the Peers, on which the Stone Peers are built, in order to secure and defend them, Others took notice (notwithstanding the Use and Necessity of publick Buildings, and the Magnificence, with which they ought

ought to be built) what a wretched Appearance, most of those in and about *London* made, (*St. Paul's Church, Greenwich Hospital*, and a few others excepted) and what a scandalous Effect a Wooden Bridge must have over the *Thames*, any where within the Bills of Mortality; and what injurious Reflections would be made on that Occasion. Some People were so free as to assert, it could not be the Intention of the Legislature, in two consecutive Acts of Parliament, granting near 100000 *l.* that this large Sum should be laid out, chiefly in building a precarious Wooden Bridge; and the Remainder, as they suspected, applied to the buying of another Wooden Bridge. And there were Members of your House who publicly declared, that if they had entertained any suspicion of such unaccountable Resolutions, they would either have absolutely voted against the Bridge-Bill, or at least moved for some Clauses to have been inserted in it, that should have prevented a publick Work from being turned into a pitiful private Jobb.

This general Dislike soon shewed it self in the News-Papers, and some of them mentioned with a Sneer, that after many Meetings,

ings, the Commissioners had at last come to a Resolution, as to the Materials of the intended Bridge, and were resolv'd it should be a *Wooden One*. In some other Papers, this Passage out of *Seneca De vita beata*, was inserted: *Pone in opulentissima me domo, pone ubi aurum, argentumque in promiscuo usu sit, non suspiciam me ob ista, quæ etiamsi apud me, extra me tamen sunt; in sublicium Pontem me transfer, et inter egentes abige: non ideo tamen me despiciam*; whereby they would induce their Readers to have a very mean Opinion of Wooden Bridges in general; others express'd their Disdain in the following Lines; making good what *Javenal* long ago said, *facit Indignatio versum*;

*By Rufus' Hall, where Thames polluted flows,
Provok'd, the Genius of the River rose,
And thus exclaim'd--Have I, ye British Swains,
Have I, for ages lov'd your fertile Plains?
Giv'n Herds, and Flocks, and Villages Increase,
And fed a rieber than the Golden Fleece?
Have I, ye Merchants, with each swelling Tide,
Pour'd Afric's Treasure in, and India's Pride?
Lent you the Fruits of every Nation's Toil?
Made every Climate yours, and every Soil?*

*Yet, pilfer'd from the Poor, by Gaming base,
Yet must a WOODEN BRIDGE my Waves dis-
grace?*

*Tell not to foreign Streams the shameful Tale!
And be it publish'd in no Gallic Vale!*

*He said; and plunging in his Crystal Dome,
While o'er his Head the circling Waters foam.*

A Rumour being spread, that the Person, who, as it was generally believed, was designed for the chief Director of the Wooden Bridge, intended to have a good deal of Stone and Iron Work upon it, *more for Ornament than Use*, and among other things, a kind of short blunted Obelisks, to support Lamps; a ludicrous Inscription, beginning as the Pope's Bulls do, appear'd; and they who handed it about, said it should be engraved on one of those Obelisks, intended to be placed (not upon the Bridge it self, but) upon the *Westminster* Abutment thereof, in order, as they pretended, to inform Posterity, (long after its Destruction by Ice, Fire, or other Accidents) that a Wooden Bridge had once been erected near that Place, a Copy whereof came to my hands, and is as follows;

In

In perpetuam Rei Memoriam.
*Regnante **** Principe Augustissimo, Munifi-*
centissimo
Lege, Comitibus Regni, semel atque iterum sancita;
Curante, CLXXXX, illustrium Procerum
Cætu,
Ampla, et voluntaria tum Indigenarum, tum
Exteriorum
Contributione Sortibus habita;
***** Armiger aliquandiu Faber Lignarius,*
Mox suis evectus, Suorumque Meritis,
Regal^m. Oper^m. Curat^r. Sagacissimus,
Nec non Architectus Famosissimus,
Hic prope Sublicium Pontem,
In universum (quamdiu steterit) com-
modum,
Civibus Mærentibus,
Populo denique penitus indignante,
Extrui fecit.
*A prima Legis Sanctione Anno *****

And upon the Face of the Obelisk, next
 the Water,

Parturiunt Montes, &c.

These Reflections, and many more which I often heard, and care not to trust to Paper, besides expressing an Indignation against particular Persons, were all aimed against Wooden Bridges in general. Abundance of People were also displeased with the Place; and among those that would have had the Bridge nearer *Whitehall*, there were many of Quality and Fashion; who thought the *Horse-Ferry* too far from the middle part of the Town.

On the Day appointed by the last publick Advertisement, several Persons brought and presented to the Commissioners, Plans, or Models, and Proposals for Timber Bridges at the *Horse-Ferry*; Many of which, as to Construction and Appearance, were almost Copies of *Fulham-Bridge*: some few of them had a Timber Floor laid over Stone Peers, of such Dimensions, and placed at such a distance, as might serve for a Bridge entirely of Stone, at any time hereafter; one of these, the Openings of which were few and large, had a Row of Wooden Piles in the middle, between every two Peers, to support a Wooden Floor for the present, as well as the Centers for Stone Arches hereafter: Another consisted

lifted of several large Arches, which appeared Circular, tho' form'd of straight Timber; standing on Stone Peers, and having no Piles in the middle of the Arches; which Wooden Arches were said, might serve of themselves as Frames or Centers to turn the Stone Arches upon, at any time hereafter: Another Design proposed, that the Wooden Piles which supported the Bridge, should be furred or sheathed with Planks, studd full of Nails, and pitched, or pay'd all over, like the Bottoms of Ships trading to the *West-Indies*. There were many other Designs offered; some consisting of one Arch, three Arches, and five Arches; which considering the Breadth of the River, must of consequence be extremely wide. All which Designs or Models, with their Proposals annexed, were referred to a Committee of Commissioners, who were to meet and consider of them the Week following; when and where all Commissioners that came, were to have a Vote; and it was likewise ordered, that *Thomas Ripley Esq;* be desired to attend the said Committee, in order to *assist them with his Advice*. As this last Order was repeated at almost every subsequent Meeting of the Commissioners,

sioners, this Year, either sitting as a Committee, or a Board, it will be needless to mention it again.

It being now generally believed that the Committee would chuse a Timber Bridge, entirely of Wood, Peers and all; several of the Commissioners received Anonymous Letters, full of scandalous Reflections on their Proceedings; some of which were read at the Committee; the Substance whereof, as far as Memory may be depended upon, was, *That it was plainly seen, the Affair of building a Bridge was managed, as if intended to favour one Man only, whose Capacity, all proper Judges in particular, and the Publick in general, had declared much inferior to the Work he wanted to direct: That the Design of reserving a Sum to purchase the Property of Fulham Bridge, appeared but too plain, by the Behaviour of those active Persons, greatly concerned in that Bridge: That the Legislature must have had much nobler Sentiments and Intentions, when they appointed so great a number of Lords and Commons as Commissioners; which they had but lately confirmed, by granting them a second Lottery, with a Deduction of 98000*l.* to defray the Charges of the Bridge; to which*
they

they had added Power to lay a large Toll, unlimited as to time, that nothing might be wanting to make it compleat. However, these Intimations made so little Impression, that at the very first Meeting of the Committee following, they resolved, that the intended Bridge should not have any Stone at all in it, not even in the Peers; and that all Draughts of Timber Bridges, placed upon Stone Peers, should be returned to those that brought them; and after examining several Designs of Bridges, entirely of Wood, most of them were found fault with; and in particular, those which had such monstrous large Arches, as difficult to be put in execution, and much more so to keep in repair. As to that whose Piles were to be sheathed or furred, notwithstanding the Proposers were said to have Friends in the Committee, it was urged against it, that such Piles must be sheathed before they are driven into the Bed of the River; that the Sheathing would almost infallibly be ripped off in the driving; but if they should happen to abide the driving, this Sheathing, Nails and Pitch would indeed be a good Security against Worms (of which there was little or

no

no danger in the *Thames*) but would not hinder the Piles from rotting, as soon, if not sooner than if they were left bare, as was instanced in Shipping sheathed in this manner ; by which means the Worms are indeed kept from the Ship-side for some time ; but they are as soon, and even sooner rotten, than if they had no Sheathing at all. However, the Committee did not fix upon any particular Model or Design, but adjourned themselves for three or four Days.

The 5th of *August*, the Committee met again, and after examining several Schemes and Proposals, referred them all to Mr. *Ripley*, then present, for him to consider them separately, and make his Report to the Committee ; and ordered an Advertisement in the publick Papers, signifying, that no Plans would be received after the 9th Instant.

During this Adjournment, several Persons accordingly waited on Mr. *Ripley*, with their Plans and Models ; and after he had examined them, some begg'd to know, what was his Opinion, or what fault he found with their Designs, that they might the better have an Opportunity of explaining their Thoughts to him ; to which, I am told, he

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generally answered; that *he would make a very short Report of his Opinion to the Committee; but that, for his part, he was for a plain and simple Thing, and as he thought, the plainer and simpler the better.*

About this time, some Persons prevailed upon several Members of the Court of *Burgeses*, and great Numbers of the Inhabitants of *Westminster*, the major part dwelling in the upper Liberties, to subscribe to a Petition that was afterwards presented to the Commissioners, at the *Jerusalem-Chamber*, praying that the intended Bridge might be built at the *New Palace-Yard*, or thereabouts: The Commissioners read their Petition, and after having observed with some surprize, that most of the present Petitioners had subscribed to the Petition presented to the House of Commons (the Substance of which, I have already quoted from the Votes) they acquainted the Gentlemen who attended the Petition, that the Place of erecting the said Bridge, had been already determined by that Board.

The next Meeting was on the 12th of *August*, when the Committee received and read Mr. *Ripley's* Report; wherein he seemed to dislike all the Designs already presented, ex-

cept one that was offered by his Friend, Mr. *James* of *Greenwich*; which Design, together with a Pamphlet published by him, criticizing all others that had appeared before, relating to the Bridge at *Westminster*, has very much lessened the good Opinion most People entertained of his Learning and Skill, in Numbers, Geometry and Architecture. Mr. *Ripley* then recommended to the Commissioners, as the most eligible Method for their next Proceedings, to erect or build two Peers at their own Costs and Charges, which (as it was generally understood) would certainly secure the Undertaker or Undertakers, tho' not entirely from the loss of their Reputation, yet from being ruined, if they should not succeed. He afterwards produced a new Design of a Timber Bridge, that might stand either on Stone or Wooden Peers; which, he said, *might be of some Use to the Commissioners in their future Enquiries*; and his Draught was received, notwithstanding the printed Advertisement to the contrary, mentioned above.

This Design was greatly approved of, by many of the Commissioners, and very strongly opposed by others. To give you

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an Idea of it, I need only acquaint you with what I am told, by those that have seen it, and measured the parts thereof: The Peers were to be either of Stone, set upon the tops of Piles, sawn off a little below Low-water, enclosed in a Case of Dovetail Piles, or intirely made of Piles, with a flat Floor laid over them; the Beams of this Floor were to be assisted by oblique Supports, or Braces in four Places underneath, in every Passage between the Peers; two bearing on one Peer, and two on the other. Those that opposed it, said, among other things, that as to Appearance, this Bridge would hardly exceed That over the Canal, belonging to the Water-works near *Chelfea* (which I know you have seen) and having measured the Parts, by the Scale annexed to the Draught, were surprized to find, those Braces or oblique Supports of the middle Arch, not less than 32 feet in length, without any Assistance whatsoever to strengthen them; the middle Parts of the Beams unsupported; were found to be not less than 25 feet in length, which they conceived, were Proportions not to be admitted in a Bridge that ought to be built in the strongest, and most

solid manner, on account of the continual passing and repassing of so many heavy Carriages, and the Action of great quantities of Ice in hard Winters, especially in a River of such a Breadth and Depth, and that receives so much Tide as the *Thames*. They wondered how it happened, that so many Plans and Proposals already offered, had been thrown aside, to make room for one, which in their Opinion, was far from being preferable to any of those already received and rejected— However Mr. Ripley, being still present, the Committee took into consideration his Report to them, and resolved upon a Report to be made from them to the Commissioners three or four days after.

The Commissioners received and read the Report of their Committee (Mr. Ripley being present) and having settled the Salaries of their Officers, and other private Business, ordered an Advertisement to be put in the publick News-Papers, whereby all Commissioners were desired to attend, by Ten in the Forenoon, at the *Jerusalem-Chamber*, on the 24th *August* Instant, to consider of the said Report; and the same Advertisement was repeated till the Day of meeting; when, after

after Debates, *Mr. Ripley being still present*, they approved of what the Committee had reported to them, and resolved, that on account of the Difficulties that would occur in contracting with the Workmen to execute any of their Designs, it would be most advisable to follow the last Scheme that was presented, and for a Tryal, to build two Piers in the River, at the Expence of the Commissioners; and accordingly ordered *Mr. Ripley* to prepare a Model of two Piers with an Arch or Floor over them, so as to represent part of the intended Bridge, either built with Stone, or Wood; and then adjourned to the 31st *August*, to their new Office, in *Duke-Street, Westminster*, at Ten in the Forenoon, precisely, in order to consider further of the Report of the Committee, &c. at which time, all the Commissioners were still desired to be present; by a publick Advertisement in several of the News-Papers.

On the 31st of *August*, *Mr. Ripley* presented a Model (according to Order) for a Bridge, such as I have described to you just above, and he explained how he would proceed in the Execution; but many Doubts arising

arising as to the Security of Peers placed on the tops of Piles; sawn off just below the Surface of the River at Low-water, and to the Practicability of laying the Foundations lower, by making a Case of Dovetail Piles, and pumping the Water out by the ordinary Methods (which several of the Commissioners asserted; would not answer in gravelly Soils, such as the Bed of the *Thames*; where the height of Water is twice a day so very considerable, as from 24 to 30 feet) therefore they moved for other Methods to be laid before the Commissioners at the next Meeting, and then adjourned to the 7th of *September* following, which was the last Meeting this Year.

On that day, some Methods for laying the Foundations below the Bed of the River, were explained, which the Board seemed to approve of. It was then represented, that most of the Commissioners were out of town, that few of them attended the Meetings, notwithstanding they had been desired to be present, by publick Advertisements; that the Season of the Year was so far advanced, that very little could be done in such an Undertaking, till the Spring; and that in order

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finally to fix on the Place and Materials, and make choice of Persons capable of directing and conducting a Work of this Importance, it was necessary to have the Opinion of as many of the Commissioners as possible ; for which Reasons, they adjourned themselves to the 1st of *February* next, about which time, as they apprehended, full Boards might reasonably be expected, and by this means, any hasty Resolutions of a small Number of the Commissioners would be prevented.

You cannot imagine, Sir, what an Outcry this long Adjournment occasioned, among the generality of People. Some imagined, this was a sure Omen of having no Bridge at all, and used as a decent Expedient to drop the whole Design. Others, that it was done in order to secure a good Jobb, and effectually provide for the Interest of some favourite Undertakers. Others suspected, it was to make a proper Provision for those concerned in *Fulham-Bridge*, whose comfortable Dividends (that had for many years past been annually paid them) would be considerably reduced, if this Bridge should be made a free one.—Others suggested, that

that it was a Contrivance of the Stock-Jobbers, to secure and render another Lottery absolutely necessary, and to have time to prepare the proper Persons. Others affirmed, that it was owing to the Power and Influence of the City with some great Men, who were now determined to undermine and demolish the whole Design. Some of the Inhabitants of the upper Liberties of *Westminster*, upon these long Delays, declared, they did not care what became of the Bridge, if it was not to be at the *New Palace-Yard*, or thereabouts—affirming, it would be of little Benefit to the Town, to build a Bridge almost out of it. Whilst the Inhabitants of *Westminster*, especially those of the Parish of *St. John the Evangelist*, as loudly declared, that a Bridge would prove their inevitable Ruin, if situated at any other Place than the *Horse-Ferry*, or thereabouts; Besides all these contradictory private Opinions, several Persons (who would have been greatly affronted to be reckoned amongst the Mobb) were got to such a pitch of Insolence, that they dar'd to assert, that some of the Commissioners had been negligent, that several of them were interested elsewhere, and partial

tial on many Occasions, and that a good Bridge could have been finished, or at least the best half of it, in less time than had been spent in settling the Place and Materials of this intended Bridge, which to them did not at all appear more forward than the first day the Commissioners met.

I hope, Sir, you will excuse my having drawn this Letter into so great a length ; I have endeavoured, according to your desire, to give you an account of all the material Transactions and Resolutions of the Commissioners, that are come to my knowledge, which I collected, not only from what has publickly appeared, but from what has been related to me by such of them, as I have the Honour to be personally acquainted with ; to which I have added, what Observations and Remarks I have occasionally heard People make on this Affair. But if a true Account could be come at of all the secret Measures taken to serve private Interests and particular Purposes, I doubt not but it would prove not only much more entertaining than this, but more useful to those that are desirous to know, *how, and in what Manner,*

publick Works are managed. I expect the Honour of your Answer, with the utmost Impatience, and I beg you would let me know your Sentiments freely, as to the Place and Materials of this intended Bridge.

I am,

Hon^{ble} Sir,

Your most Obedient

Humble Servant.



THE



THE
ANSWER.

S I R,

Novemb. 24. 1737.

I HAVE at last received your long-expected Account of the Transactions, relating to the Bridge at *Westminster*. I knew our Sentiments on that Subject were much the same, and as you conversed with several of the Gentlemen, who met in order to prepare the way for that Undertaking, I concluded, you would be acquainted with every step taken, and would be able (and as I supposed, willing) to give me some information of what has happened in that Affair.

Three Months, since my Letter to you, and above two since the last Adjournment

of the Commissioners, being elapsed without hearing from you, I began to be uneasy ; but last *Sunday* Morning, whilst I was contriving (as I walked on my Terras) some reasonable Excuse for so long and unusual a Silence, *George* brought me your Packet, and all seemed well, till I tore open the Cover, and run over your 8 Sheets. I had little satisfaction upon the first hasty reading, and much less, upon a more careful Perusal, than I had promised my self. My Friend, you treat me with Suspicion, and you express your self with such Caution, that I am almost afraid you are going to turn Courtier. As I expected the Truth, and nothing but the Truth, so I hoped for the whole Truth from you. I flattered my self, I should have found a just Account of Actions, and their true Springs and Motives, and not to have been entertained with a mere detail of outside Appearances, Dates, and Paragraphs from Newspapers ; in short, I must desire that for the future you would write with the Frankness and Openness becoming a true Friend : And to shew you, I can follow the Advice I give, I like this as a Model for our future Correspondence. I venture to send you News from above

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one hundred miles distance, of what was done in a manner under your eye: Some indeed, are only Reports, which you must take as I received them; yet as I believe you'll find most of them true, I have added my Sentiments thereon, without any Cookery, in as plain a manner as I wish all Men would dress, eat, speak, write, and act.—But being cooler now than when I began to answer you, I give you my thanks, before I proceed any farther, for the Trouble you have given your self.

Publick Buildings, commodious Streets well paved, clean, and lighted, good Roads, navigable Rivers, and useful Bridges, have always appeared of the greatest Service to a State, and Evidences of a good Police, as well as of the Wealth, Industry and Prosperity of a People. In all well-regulated Governments, Persons of the greatest Integrity, Independency, Capacity and Taste, invested with the same Authorities as in the *Greek* and *Roman* Republicks, have been, and are still appointed to inspect all publick Works. Their Office is not only to keep in good repair, and improve the Roads, Rivers, Bridges, &c. in being, but to design and direct new ones, where necessary, for the Increase

Increase of Trade, or the Convenience of the Subjects. I could enlarge on this Head, and offer my Wishes; but I shall wave it at present, and proceed to what more particularly relates to the main Subject of your Letter.

Ever since the building a Bridge at *Westminster* met with approbation and encouragement from the Legislature, I have been very solicitous to get what Information I could, on this head. I wrote frequent Letters to you, and other Friends in Town; I bought the two Acts, and all the Pamphlets hitherto published for Sale, and have also procured, I believe, all that have been distributed *gratis* on this Subject, and I have made all the inquiries I could among the Commissioners I knew; so that I think, I am able to send you some Remarks upon your Letter, and add several Articles you have omitted.

Your Account of the Measures taken by the Gentlemen of *Westminster*, before the Bill was brought into the House, is the best I have met with, and gave me some Pleasure; but I could wish to see that Account of the Proceedings, which you mention was drawn up and laid before the Members for *Westminster*.

ster. I have heard, it was a well-digested Piece ; if it is in Print, or if you can procure a Copy, pray let me have it ; if not, I must try what I can do my self, when I come to Town, next Sessions of Parliament.

I was not at all surprized to find the Lottery, granted by the first Act, failed of Success ; the Opposition from the City of *London* must have greatly hurt it. Besides, the Place appointed to receive the Money was, in my Opinion, very improper : Prince *Eugene* did not solicit, and fix the Loan from the *English* (intended for the Relief of *Turin*) at *Paris*, but at *London* ; and surely, *Westminster* might have been a proper Place for taking in a Loan, for building a Bridge at *Westminster*. Suppose two or three Extra-Clerks had been added to his Majesty's Receipt of Exchequer, and the Tellers had been employed to secure the Money, till wanted, I cannot but think, this would have been as satisfactory to the Publick, would have saved 2000*l.* at least, and have been, perhaps, attended with better Success. A Præmium was also thought absolutely necessary, to take hold of the Money-Mongers, who would thereby be tempted to subscribe largely ; for in this,

as in many other Bargains, those who buy the Devil, must sell him. The Number of Tickets in the first Lottery was likewise too great, being 125000; Experience shewing, that more than 80000 is seldom practicable: this last Number perhaps, might likewise be found nearer the Reason of things, by People acquainted with political Arithmetick; and since all Lotteries, out of which Deductions are made, are more or less disadvantageous, in the proportion which such Deduction bears to the whole Sum; 'tis hard to imagine, how any but the few who chuse to game at any rate, on the silly pretence of being in Fortune's way, should venture far in such a Lottery: The more prudent considered, they were to receive no Interest for their Money, lock'd up in the Bank, probably for a Year or more; that they should have but little Chance to sell their Tickets at an advanced Price, the Market being overstock'd, and were sure to lose, one with another, 16 *per Cent.* of the amount of such Tickets, if they stood the chance of Drawing. This first Lottery failing of Success, I perceived immediately, that the Commissioners could not enter upon any material Business.

Business, and must be under a necessity of applying again to Parliament. I was extremely glad to find the Powers of the Commissioners so much enlarged by the second Act, so that they might proceed with vigour, and have no farther occasion to apply to Parliament, provision having been made for their raising Money on the Credit of the Toll, in case the 98000*l.* deducted out of the second Lottery, should prove insufficient to erect such a lasting and magnificent Bridge, as would answer all the purposes intended, and redound to the Honour and Credit of the Nation, which the Legislature seemed to point out to them, by granting so much Money at once.

By the Plans, Models and Calculations which were published whilst the Bill was depending, I believe most People were of opinion, that the desire of the Petitioners for a Bridge, was to have a strong and useful one, and every body seemed to think, that a Wooden Bridge, tho' ever so well contrived, would be extremely improper, as being subject to be suddenly destroyed, in want of continual Repairs whilst standing, and of a mean Appearance, as to be far below

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the Dignity of such Commissioners, as well as extremely ill-suited to the fine River, over which it was intended to be built. I have heard good Judges say, that in less than 50 Years, a Wooden Bridge must cost as much as one of Stone. If therefore the Parliament, in order to save a little Money at first, had designed such a precarious Bridge should be built, surely they would not have thought it a matter of such Importance, as to appoint near 200 Lords and Commoners, and most of them not more conspicuous by their Stations, than for their Wisdom, Learning, and Capacity to be Commissioners for such an Undertaking; but probably they would have left the building of such a Bridge to the People of *Westminster*, by giving them leave to assess some small Pound-rate on themselves, sufficient for so narrow a Scheme.

As to what the Commissioners have done since the second Act passed, I believe your Account to be true, but too superficial; on which I shall now make a few Remarks. You hinted in your Letter, that the purchasing the Property of *Fulham Bridge* from the present Proprietors, seem'd to have been the favourite Project of some; I have had

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Intimations of this from good hands besides yours, and cannot help thinking that an extraordinary Complaisance for the Owners of *Fulham Bridge*, greatly influenced many of the Resolutions taken this Year. I have been told, the Reasons alledged for having a Wooden Bridge, were—That there was not Money enough to build one of Stone, either at *Palace-Yard*, or at the *Horse-Ferry*—That a Wooden Bridge would be much sooner built, and passable—That it would not cost above 30000 *l.* and the remainder of the Money might be laid out in opening and mending the Roads and Streets leading to this Bridge; but I never heard it publicly said, that by contriving to have a Bridge built at the least Expence possible, Money would be left for buying off the Proprietors of *Fulham Bridge*; so that I presume, if this was the Intention of a few, they kept this Project *in petto*, till a fit Opportunity should offer: For I remember well, the same Affair had been attempted in the House, at the second Reading of the last Act, and a strong Negative put upon it, as I find you rightly observe in your Letter. To these specious Pretences for a Wooden Bridge, I

could have offered by way of Answer, had I been one of the Commissioners, and present at the Debates, That tho' the Money left as yet unapplied, out of 98000*l.* was not sufficient to build a Stone Bridge, at either of the Places mentioned in the second Act, yet upon a careful Perusal of that Act, it would plainly appear, that the Commissioners had power to raise as much as would be necessary, on the credit of a Toll, without farther Application to Parliament; that since Money was not wanting for employing as many hands as could be usefully kept to work, under the Direction of Persons of sufficient Capacity, it was very probable that a solid Stone Bridge would not be above four Years in building, and that it might be made passable in half that time—That if a Stone Bridge should require even seven Years in building, yet no impartial or publick-spirited Man could hesitate a moment, in preferring it to any Wooden Bridge whatsoever, tho' built in ever so short a time—That to save Money to open the Roads leading to it (if nothing worse was really intended) seemed to be an unnecessary Caution; since the Bridge being once built as it ought to be, the
 Streets

Streets and Roads would soon be made wider and more commodious, which the Owners of Lands and Houses near the said Bridge, would find it their Interests to do, as soon as possible. Besides, I have heard a Proposal was offered to the Board for that purpose, which had been previously examined by Persons of Judgment, who thought it practicable, without putting the Commission to any Expence on that account. This Proposal, I am well assured, was referred, together with the Plans and Estimates for a Wooden Bridge, to a Committee, but was never taken into Consideration; the Reasons I will not so much as guess at, lest I should be mistaken, and attribute to Design, what perhaps might proceed merely from Omission, thro' the Hurry and Multiplicity of Affairs, then depending before them. I find also, that the first Draught and Proposal for a Wooden Bridge, was presented to the Commissioners by Mr. Ripley. On this Occasion, I heard some Persons who pretended to know the secret History, not only of *Westminster*, but of *Fulham Bridge*, exclaim with the *Latin Poet*,

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—quo non mortalia pectora cogis,
Auri sacra Fames!—

Sure it is, that the generality of People were much at a loss to find, what Reasons Mr. *Ripley* had to turn his Thoughts that way, not knowing how considerably he is interested in *Fulham Bridge*. As for my part, I have seen several Works and Buildings, said to have been performed under that Gentleman's Direction, and some according to Designs he has owned; but you must excuse me from declaring my Sentiments, which I could not do without entering into a detail, not at all proper for an Answer to a Letter about Bridges only: Besides, it is a Subject which almost every Person pretends to understand, whether properly qualified or not. This unaccountable Vanity of judging peremptorily in Matters that have not been the Objects of our earliest Enquiries and continual Application, seems to me to be the true Reason, why Peoples Opinions are so contradictory one to another, almost in every thing, but in nothing more than the Merits or Capacity of the same Persons: Mr. *Pope*,
not

not better known for one of our greatest and best Poets, than for his avowed Detestation of Ignorance and Self-sufficiency, has mentioned Mr. Ripley twice in his Works; in his Letter to the Earl of Burlington, he says,

*What brought Sir Visto's ill-got wealth to waste?
Some Dæmon whisper'd, Visto, have a Taste;
Heav'n visits with a Taste the wealthy Fool,
And needs no Rod but Ripley with a Rule.
See sportive Fate! to punish aukward Pride,
Bids Bubo build, and sends him such a Guide;
A standing Sermon at each year's Expence,
That never Coxcomb reach'd Magnificence.*

And in his Imitation of the first Epistle of the second Book of *Horace's* Epistles,

*Who builds a Bridge that never drove a Pile,
Should Ripley venture, all the world would
smile.*

What could induce Mr. *Pope* to place Mr. *Ripley* in such a light? whether he can justify what he has said, or not, I will not say; I am sure, several of the Commissioners had a much greater Opinion of this Gentleman's Abilities

Abilities and Taste, and treated him in a manner, which has plainly shewn him (in their Judgment) a Man of the highest Merit; for it seems, that Mr. *Ripley* was almost the only Person consulted—That an Order was made, whereby Mr. *Ripley* was desired to attend the Commissioners, *and assist them with his Advice*, which Order was repeated at most, if not all their Meetings this Year—That Mr. *Ripley* was present when the Committee had under Examination the several Plans and Proposals, for a Timber Bridge at the *Horse-Ferry*—That all these Plans and Proposals, and the Persons who brought them, were referred to Mr. *Ripley*, as a proper Judge, for him to make his report thereof to the Committee—That after Mr. *Ripley* had declared in his Report, that he disliked them all, except one (presented by his Friend at *Greenwich*) he proposed a new Scheme of his own, which was received, tho' some days after publick Notice had been given in the Papers, that no more Plans or Proposals would be received—That Mr. *Ripley* was present when the Committee took his Report into Consideration; as also when the Committee agreed upon the Report they

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intended to make to the Board of Commissioners, and when the Board of Commissioners received the Report of their Committee, and took it into consideration. I am likewise informed, that at most of these Meetings, Mr. *Ripley* sat at the Table among the Commissioners, which however, I don't think so very extraordinary, as some People pretend; the Place he so deservedly enjoys under the Crown being a sufficient Reason, if there were no other, to pay him that respect; besides, I am assured there was always room enough for him at this Board, especially during the time Wooden Bridges were upon the Carpet.

It seems also, that when the Resolution for a Wooden Bridge at the *Horse-Ferry* was so generally disliked by the Publick, and so severely spoken against every where, the next favourite Project was to promote at any rate the Scheme of some Projectors of good Interest, who proposed a sort of Stone Peers, which must have been much dearer, and longer in the Execution than Wooden Peers, but equally precarious as to Solidity and Duration, and equally pitiful as to Appearance; these Peers were to be inclosed in a

Case of Dove-tail Piles, and the Water pumped out (if possible) by the common Methods ; and if this should be found impracticable, they were to return to the old exploded Method of setting these pretended Stone Peers on the top of Wooden Piles, just below the Surface of Low-water : But I am told, some Noblemen and Gentlemen then present, known to be very good Judges in these Matters, represented so forcibly to the rest of the Commissioners, the Dangers attending such Methods, and gave Instances of a modern Date, where they had proved intirely ineffectual, that the intended Resolution of approving this Scheme, and ordering it into immediate Execution, was laid aside ; and tho' you mentioned that they moved for other Methods to be examined, and that some of them after having been explained before the Commissioners, seemed to be approved of, yet in my humble Opinion, these Noblemen and Gentlemen can never be sufficiently praised, for their prudent Motion for a long Adjournment, which being carried in the Affirmative, did indeed hinder some Preparations that might have been made before the next Spring ; but it ought to be considered,

sidered, that such a Recess did also prevent, as you observe, any hasty Resolution from being taken in Matters that required so much Consideration. Besides, by adjourning to the 1st of *February* next, they paid a very great Compliment to the greatest number of Commissioners, then absent on their private Affairs, or Pleasures, and shewed thereby that nothing ought to be determined without knowing the Opinions of the Majority of the Commissioners, or at least giving them an Opportunity, at a time when most of them are in Town, to hear what should be proposed, and to deliver their Sentiments upon what should be laid before them, and consequently have it in their power to reject such Projects as favoured more of private Interest, than publick Good.

Your Letter mentions, that a very great Out-cry arose against this long Adjournment; but I think all the Suggestions against it are false and ridiculous, tho' extremely natural in the Mouths of unthinking People; It would be in vain to urge to such, that preserving one of the finest and most useful Rivers in the World from Injury — Securing its Navigation — Preventing

and removing Obstructions to the Trade and Communication of the several parts of the Town by Water, already too much incumbered—A regard for the Subsistence of so many thousand Souls, as have nothing but their Labour, in carrying Goods and Passengers on the River, to support themselves and Families—The Consideration of proper Remedies against the great Difficulties attending the execution of a Work of this Importance—The just Apprehensions of the dangerous Consequences that must follow any Mistake or Miscarriage—The Care that ought to be taken, with respect to the Oeconomy when building—And the Security and Preservation of this Fabrick, when finished—are surely Articles that can never be too much, or too deliberately considered. And that it were better ten Years should be spent in making proper Inquiries, and taking the most prudent Measures, than that one single Pile be driven, or one single Stone be laid, injudiciously, or out of its proper Place and Situation. What surprized me most, when I read your Account of the Murmurings occasioned by this prudent, long Adjournment of the Commissioners, were the Clamours

Clamours of the Inhabitants of the City and Liberties of *Westminster* : those dwelling in the upper Liberties being against a Bridge at the *Horse-Ferry*, and the rest as much averse to its being removed lower. Both Parties forgetting, that the Parliament having ordered this Bridge to be built at the Charge of the Publick, it ought to be placed where most useful to the Publick in general—That as the Inhabitants of *Westminster* begged for it, it did not become them to chuse, and for this Reason, among others, that they were so far from having contributed one Farthing towards it, more than any other of his Majesty's Subjects, that I am informed, those of the upper Liberties had often declared publicly, before the Bill was brought into the House, that they would consent to no Tax, tho' ever so small, on that account; which obliged the Gentlemen who were at that time concerting proper Measures to obtain the Bridge-Act, to declare by a publick Advertisement, that no such Tax was intended.

At the Conclusion of your Letter, you desire me to give you my Opinion as to the Place and Materials of this intended Bridge.

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As to Materials, I find you are so justly and so particularly warm against Wooden Bridges, that I need not enlarge in giving you more Reasons for concurring with you. As to my Sentiments of the most proper Situation for the intended Bridge, you ought to consider, that I have not the Opportunity of consulting Persons capable of informing me, as the Commissioners have; if I had the Honour of being one of them, and that my Health would let me stay any considerable time in *London*, before I would conclude as to that point, I should desire to have the following Queries answered.

1. Where must the Bridge be erected, so as to prove the shortest, and easiest Communication with all the Roads already in being, in the adjacent Counties?

2. What would be the Expence of purchasing Houses and Lands, in order to make new Roads, if wanting, or only widen those that are already made?

3. Where would the Bridge be least dangerous to the Navigation, or hurtful to the Bargemen, Lightermen, and Watermen, and what would a proper Satisfaction to the last mentioned amount to?

4. Where

4. Where is the best Foundation to be found, for erecting a solid and lasting Bridge, and with the least Expence?

5. Where must a Bridge be placed, that would occasion fewest Stops, and least Confusion, especially in Parliament and Term-time?

6. Where could a Bridge be soonest made passable, and compleatly finished in the shortest time?

I make not the least doubt but the Commissioners will call before them, if they have not done it already, all Persons that can give them any Information relating to the Subject of these, or such like Queries. I could have added many more, which I omit, as being less important to the general Good; such are the following:

7. Whether by setting the Bridge at one of the Places mentioned in the Act, rather than at the other; in order to shorten the Ways upon the Stones, on one side of the River, will not occasion the lengthening them as much on the other side?

8. Whether this Bridge was not rather intended for the Use and Benefit of the City of *Westminster*, which has long wanted a

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Communication with the *Surrey*-side of the River, and therefore petitioned for, and obtained this Bill, than for the Borough of *Southwark*, who have one already, and for that reason, petitioned against it? And if so,

9. Where ought this Bridge to be situated, so as soonest to answer the intended Purpose to the Land-Owners, and Inhabitants of the *Westminster*-side, best secure to them the Benefit of a Bridge, and prevent transferring it from them, to the Borough of *Southwark*; which, by the Bend of the River, may in time, become a Center to both Cities.

10. Whether by placing this Bridge, with too great a regard for the avoiding the increase of Buildings on one side the River, may not occasion a much greater Increase, and of worse Consequence, on the other? &c. &c. &c.

Upon the whole, I am persuaded the Commissioners will place the intended Bridge, where it will be most useful to the Publick in general, with all due regard to the Interest of private People.

Having now answered all that I found material in your Letter, I shall add a few

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loose Thoughts, such as now occur to me, which may furnish Matter for our future Correspondence. Most People with whom I have conversed on this Subject, wish, that in case the Commissioners find they have not Money enough to build a good Bridge, they would, without applying again to Parliament, make use of the Powers they have of laying a temporary Toll, when the Bridge is finished, which would remove all Difficulties; since they could raise a very great Sum, either by granting Annuities upon single Lives, or borrowing Money on their own Bonds, and assigning the Revenues of this Toll for a time, till all the Annuitants should be dead, or the Bonds repaid out of the said Toll; which might easily be managed, at a trifling annual Charge; besides, in all publick Taxes, Care is, or should always be taken to lay them as equal as possible, and to make those pay most who are most obnoxious, as in sumptuary Laws, or most benefited, as in other Cases: Who therefore are so fit to pay for a Bridge, as those that go over it? and who so fit to contribute towards it, as those that will be Gainers by it? for which Reason, not only a temporary Toll, but (should

a future Application to Parliament be thought necessary) a small Pound-rate upon the City and Liberty of *Westminster*, and the four adjacent Hundreds on both sides of the *Thames*, seems to be more equitable, than to lay so great a Burthen on those who have no particular Expectation of Benefit from the Bridge but what must arise from their Chance in gaming at a very great Disadvantage in Lotteries. This Pound-rate, it is hoped, would not exceed 2 *d.* which would scarcely be felt, if collected Half-yearly, especially when granted for no more than 5 or 6 Years, while the Bridge was building, and the Roads and Avenues compleating.

On the other hand, if a greater Sum of Money should be wanted to finish the intended Bridge, and it should be thought expedient to apply again to Parliament for another Lottery, the Success of such an Application is doubtful; the Aversion of many of the Members of both Houses, and of the Publick in general, having always shewn it self strongly against all Lotteries, and never more than against the two Bridge-Lotteries; upon which account, the first never filled, and the second perhaps, would have met with

with no better Fate, if the Subscribers had not been inticed into it by a most extraordinary Præmium of 3 *per Cent.* which has sunk near 21000 *l.* out of the 98000 *l.* granted by Parliament, to which, if there be added no less than 3000 *l.* allowed to the Bank by the Commissioners, and 10000 *l.* or perhaps more, for the Charges of the Lottery, &c. we shall find the whole of these Deductions to amount to 40000 *l.* a most exorbitant Præmium for the Loan of about 60000 *l.* neat Money! I could mention several other Articles to the Disadvantage of the Adventurers in Lotteries, particularly the loss of all the Interest of the advanced Money, lock'd up from the time of the several Payments, to the Distribution of Prizes, &c. which in this Lottery, however insensible of it the Adventurers may be, amounts at common Interest, to near 10000 *l.* a most profuse Allowance to Box-keepers.

It may also be worth while to observe, that giving the Common-People false Views, and imaginary Prospects of their growing rich by Accident, or acquiring large Fortunes by Chance, is very pernicious to the Welfare of any Nation, and one of the rea-

diest ways (besides encouraging Luxury and Gaming) to enervate the Minds of a free People, and destroy their Inclination to Trade and Manufactures; which, together with a steady Industry, Frugality, and an extended Commerce, are the never-failing Means to obtain Wealth and Power to a Nation, and Ease and Prosperity to the Subjects thereof.

How happy is it for the Publick, that the *Westminster-Bridge* Bill has twice made its way through both Houses of Parliament, with the concurring Approbation of all Parties! But pray Sir, when this Bridge is built, has any care been taken to prevent Murders, dropping of Infants, and other Accidents, to which it must infallibly be subject, being declared *extra-parochial* by the Act—This particular Thought about poor Children, has so strongly affected me, that I cannot help on all occasions, expressing my sincerest Wishes for the sake of Mother and Child, that a proper Provision was made for them in our Country, as is done in most others—I could also wish, that since the building of this Bridge must of consequence nearly affect the Watermen, whose Labour on the *Thames* is their only Subsistence, earned now at the same

same rates as were settled long ago, when Money was much dearer, and all the Necessaries of Life much cheaper, their Case may be taken into consideration, and their long Fares augmented. And I am of opinion, that since they are deemed a useful Body of Men, a select Number of them should be registered with a small yearly Stipend, which in the end would prove less expensive to the Nation, and much more consistent with the Liberties of free-born Subjects, than the present unnatural and unwarrantable Practice of forcing them into the Service.

The Conservancy of the River *Thames*, particularly in regard to its Fishery, which has been long most shamefully neglected and abused, is also a Subject highly worthy a parliamentary Enquiry ; since this River, under a proper Regulation, would soon become the most prolifick in the World, and the Advantages that might from thence arise to the Town, perhaps as great as those expected from a Bridge ; but this can hardly ever be expected, whilst it is under the Care of an Officer, who must, one way or other, contrive to make the Income of his Place, not only answer the Price he gave for it, but
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increase it as much as possible, in case he think proper to dispose of it.

I have insensibly wandered from my Subject, and if in your Answer, which I expect will be more speedy and particular than your last, you should among other things, give me your Thoughts upon these Excursions of mine, you will oblige,

S I R,

Your very Humble Servant.



F I N I S.

